UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Belmont

DATE: March 17, 1964

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT

While discussing other matters with J. Lee Rankin of the President's Commission on March 16, 1964, Mr. Rankin brought up the matter of an independent examination of the rifle slug which was found on the stretcher which President Kennedy's body was on in Dallas, as well as bullet fragments found in the President's body during the autopsy at the U. S. Naval Hospital at Bethesda.

Mr. Rankin advised the Commission certainly relied on the examination conducted by the Bureau Laboratory; however, there was strong feeling in the Commission that an independent examination would be advantageous because of the fact that the Bureau had conducted the principal investigation into the assassination of the President as well as having handled the Laboratory examinations. Mr. Rankin advised he was aware of the possibility of a difference of opinion on the part of an outside examiner but nevertheless they felt this independent examination necessary. He indicated he would request the Bureau to handle the delivery of the rifle, bullet and bullet fragments to an independent examiner.

Mr. Rankin was advised that a letter had been prepared by the Bureau and sent to the Commission on March 13, concerning this matter, expressing the Bureau's views concerning this procedure. Mr. Rankin advised he had not seen the letter as yet; however, it was the desire of the Chief Justice for the Bureau to maintain as much control over items of an evidentiary nature as possible to make certain they were not lost. It was suggested to Mr. Rankin that prior to making any final decision as to the procedure to be utilized he might desire to review the Bureau's letter which thoroughly outlined the Bureau's position and Mr. Rankin advised he would do so. The Bureau's position as outlined in the letter of March 13, is that any material to be examined by an independent examiner should be delivered to the Commission by the Bureau and the Commission make all necessary arrangements for handling the delivery of the material to the independent examiner.

1 - Mr. Conrad
1 - Mr. Sullivan

And this is what I want -

JRM:mpd;jgs (9)

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Memo to Mr. Belmont from A. Rosen
Re: Assassination of the President

for a separate conference

Mr. Willens stated that probably the first of next week or shortly hereafter teams of attorneys assigned to the Commission staff would be going to Dallas, Texas, to take depositions from a number of witnesses regarding various aspects of the over-all investigation. He advised situations may arise where the Commission representatives would need assistance from our Dallas Office and inquired as to the names of individuals who could be contacted by members of the Commission staff. Mr. Willens was furnished the names of the SAC and ASAC and was told that any requests of the Dallas Office should be handled through them. Appropriate instructions are being issued to the Dallas Office relative to handling contacts by representatives of the Commission staff with the Dallas Office.

The foregoing is submitted for information.

I want any requests made of our Dallas office to be first cleared here.

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